

A GUIDE FOR PRIORITIZING SSI APPLICATIONS FOR CLIENTS IN SHELTERS, SAFE HAVENS, DROP-IN CENTERS, AND OTHER PROGRAMS SERVING HOMELESS PERSONS

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery – known as SOAR – is a project that helps States and communities increase access to SSI and SSDI for people who are homeless by providing training, technical assistance, and strategic planning. The Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services is offering critical training, which will enable case managers to help individuals gain access to benefits that will help them off the street or out of shelter into permanent housing.

This form has been adapted by DMHAS from a document initially developed by Center for Urban Community Services' Housing Resource Center and disseminated for use by Policy Research Associates, and is designed to help shelter staff prioritize their clients' SSI/SSDI applications. It is based on criteria used by the Office of Disability Determination Services (DDS) in determining the claim as well as on factors that would limit a client's ability to apply on his/her own. **This form is intended as a guide and not a substitute for staff judgment and team decision-making.**

If staff proceed with the SSI application, all criteria checked on this list should be clearly documented in the application packet. Without documentation, the information will not be considered valid, and the application will be delayed while the Social Security Administration or DDS seeks out the documentation.

PRIORITIZATION SCORING SYSTEM FOR HOMELESS CLIENTS

INSTRUCTIONS: CHECK EACH ITEM THAT IS APPLICABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL, THEN ADD UP THE INDICATED POINTS ON EACH PAGE. TALLY THE TOTAL FROM EACH PAGE, AND MATCH THE TOTAL WITH THE PRIORITIZATION CATEGORIES LISTED.

IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT AN ITEM, INDICATE WITH A QUESTION MARK, AND FOLLOW UP AS APPROPRIATE.

MAJOR IMPAIRMENTS

If individual does not meet any of the initial screening criteria, do not go any further.

- ☐ 5 Meets state criteria for SPMI¹
- ☐ 5 Has a diagnosis of Mental Retardation (IQ 70 or below)
OR
- ☐ 3 Has a diagnosis of Borderline Intellectual Functioning (IQ 71-84)
- ☐ 4 Has a documented organic brain disorder or traumatic brain injury
- ☐ 3 Has history of injuries, falls, fights or past trauma during which individual experienced a loss of consciousness

_____ = Subtotal Points: Initial Screening Criteria

AGE

- ☐ 3 Is 55 years or older
OR
- ☐ 2 Is between 50 and 54 years of age

_____ = Subtotal Points: Age

PSYCHIATRIC CRITERIA

Has an Axis II Disorder plus:

- ☐ 2 Borderline Personality Disorder
- ☐ 1 Other personality disorder except Anti-Social Personality Disorder

¹ SPMI criteria: A psychiatric diagnosis of mental illness as listed in the most recent DSM (Axis I or Axis II), other than alcohol or drug disorders, organic brain syndromes, developmental disabilities, or social conditions; and at least ONE of the following: enrollment in SSI or SSD due to mental illness, OR extended impairment in functioning due to mental illness, OR demonstrated ongoing reliance on psychiatric treatment, rehabilitation and supports

Has a current Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) score of:

- ☐ 5 40 or lower
- OR**
- ☐ 3 Between 41 and 60
- ☐ 3 Has a documented history of psychiatric decompensation, including physical violence or threatening behavior, verbal threats or aggression, suicidality, homicidality, paranoid delusions, or command hallucinations
- ☐ 3 Is prescribed treatment with psychotropic medication
- ☐ 5 Is non-adherent to prescribed psychotropic medication regimen, OR is expected to be non-adherent in the community
- ☐ 5 Continues to have serious psychiatric symptoms even when taking psychotropic medication
- ☐ 5 Has had documented psychiatric symptoms during periods of abstinence from substance abuse lasting one month or longer(e.g., while hospitalized or incarcerated)
- ☐ 2 Persistently suffers from side effects of psychiatric medications, which impair ability to function and/or concentrate
- ☐ 2 Has history of trauma that impacts ability to function, as assessed by clinician and/or documented in records
- Has documented history of suicide attempts
- ☐ 4 Within past 5 years
- ☐ 2 Over 5 years ago
- ☐ 4 Has early history, prior to age 21, of psychiatric symptoms and/or destructive behaviors that may be related to mental illness

_____ = Subtotal Points: Psychiatric Criteria

SERVICE UTILIZATION

- ☐ 3 Has history of psychiatric hospitalizations in past two years
- ☐ 2 Has been psychiatrically hospitalized while in shelter
- ☐ 1 Has had frequent trips to emergency room requiring observation and/or treatment in crisis unit while in shelter, drop-in center, or under observation on street

- ☐ 3 Has demonstrated inability to participate in traditional, office-based mental health services

Has childhood or adolescent history of service involvement including:

- ☐ 1 Special education placement
- ☐ 1 Foster care or group home placement
- ☐ 1 Residential treatment facility placement
- ☐ 5 Is receiving or would be appropriate for mental health case management, such as Assertive Community Treatment or Intensive Case Management
- ☐ 5 Would be appropriate for supportive housing

_____ = Subtotal Points: Service Utilization

COGNITIVE ABILITY AND FUNCTIONING

- ☐ 3 Has extremely limited literacy skills
- ☐ 1 Lacks a high school diploma or GED

Appears to have cognitive limitations that impact ability to hold a job, including:

- ☐ 2 Difficulty concentrating for the time required to complete simple tasks
- ☐ 2 Inability to remember instructions
- ☐ 2 Inability to remain on task without constant supervision

_____ = Subtotal Points: Cognitive Ability and Functioning

ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING (ADLs)

- ☐ 5 Appears to lack ability to complete ADLs (e.g., hygiene, shopping, travel) independently in the community
- ☐ 2 Has demonstrated poor ADL skills while in shelter, drop-in center, or under observation on street

_____ = Subtotal Points: ADLs

SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

- ☐ 4 Has a historical pattern of anxiety, excessive fears, paranoia, and/or isolation that impacts ability to function in the community or hold a job

Appears to lack adequate social skills to hold a job in the community, as demonstrated by:

- ☐ 1 Inability or refusal to respond to direction
- ☐ 1 Responding to conflict with verbal or physical aggression
- ☐ 1 Inability or refusal to ask questions due to anxiety
- ☐ 2 Has no or extremely limited contact and support from family and/or friends
- ☐ 1 Has no or limited social interactions with anyone else

 = Subtotal Points: Social Functioning

WORK EXPERIENCE

- ☐ 4 Has been unable to hold a job for more than one month
- ☐ 4 Has been unable to hold jobs that require more than a few hours of work per week

 = Subtotal Points: Work Experience

PHYSICAL HEALTH

- ☐ 4 Has one or more serious chronic physical health problems that are or can be documented on Axis III (identify the health disorders below)

 = Subtotal Points: Physical Health

List here all items from the checklist that have been marked with a question mark:

Once the questions are answered, re-score the individual to provide an accurate score.

_____ Subtotal: Initial Screening Criteria	(max: 17)
_____ Subtotal: Age	(max: 3)
_____ Subtotal: Psychiatric Criteria	(max: 43)
_____ Subtotal: Service Utilization	(max: 22)
_____ Subtotal: Cognitive Ability and Functioning	(max: 10)
_____ Subtotal: ADLs	(max: 7)
_____ Subtotal: Social Functioning	(max: 10)
_____ Subtotal: Work Experience	(max: 8)
_____ Subtotal: Physical Health	(max: 4)
_____ Total number of points, all categories	(max: 124)

Scoring Guide:

Note that because this form encompasses such a wide range of criteria and issues, even the most clearly impaired individual will not near the maximum score.

Between 50 and 124

High Priority

Between 40 and 49

Apply at Staff Discretion

Under 40

Application Unlikely to be Approved